

On June 16th two nests contained three fresh eggs each and the third was empty and nearly ready for eggs.

The eggs are very delicate, pinkish white with a faint cap of purplish grey at the big end.

The nests are usually placed on branches at least as thick as the diameter of the nest and they are very difficult to spot.

*Grandala calicolor* (Hodgson's Grandala).—These beautiful birds were observed on June 10th feeding close to the melting snow in a small colony at about 13,000 feet.

They were in pairs, but I failed to discover a nest and fancy they had not begun to breed.

*Chelidon nepalensis* (Hodgson's Martin).—Several small colonies of Hodgson's Martin were found breeding under overhanging rocks on vertical precipices at about 13,500 feet.

With the aid of a long pole carried up 2 or 3 miles from the forests below we succeeded in reaching some 8 or 10 nests, but the birds were only just commencing to lay, so we only secured seven eggs.

The nests were exactly like those of the English House Martin, only smaller, and were lined with fine grass.

The eggs were, of course, pure white and measured from 0".70 to 0".77 in length and from 0".48 to 0".51 in breadth, the average being 0".75 by 0".50.

The breeding of this species at such high elevations has not, I believe, been reported previously.

B. B. OSMASTON, I.F.S.

DEHRA DUN, October 1917.

#### No. V.—BIRD'S NESTING IN THE BHILLUNG VALLEY, TEHRI GARHWAL.

*Scotopæ rusticola* (The Woodcock).—On my way back to camp from shooting I flushed a bird at my feet and looking down found four eggs on the ground. I was near the top of a ridge some 11,000 feet high overlooking the Bhillung Valley. The nest was on the side of the hill under a single root of rhododendron, and was just a mere hollow lined with a few leaves. The surrounding ground was grass with patches of brush-wood like heather. I waited for the return of the bird which turned out to be a Woodcock. The eggs were large for the size of the bird and measured 1.81 × 1.4 : 1.8 × 1.39 : 1.75 × 1.4 and 1.76 × 1.4. They were in colour a buffish brown, with spots and blotches especially at the larger end of dark brown with underlying marks of purple. They were within about three days of hatching. Birds that I took to be Woodcock used to fly round the camp like flying foxes every night making a most extraordinary buzzing noise. I tried in vain to shoot them but they always appeared when I was not ready. Their long beaks showed out clearly in Silhouette in the evening sky.

*Merula albicincta* (The White-collared Onzel).—I found two nests of this birds on the same day, June 6th, at an altitude of 10,500 feet. Both nests were made of moss and roots and lined with grass and were situated in the fork of a small tree about 4½ feet from the ground. The first nest contained four fresh eggs (1.25 × .91 : 1.25 × .9 : 1.24 × .9 : 1.24 × 1.89) and were exactly like those of the English Blackbird, a bluish green background with brownish spots and blotches especially at the larger end. The second nest contained one egg just hatching and one newly hatched young. The birds were very shy in both cases and flew off with a loud noise.

This bird was very common about this part and must have been breeding in fair numbers.

*Merula castanea* (The Grey-headed Ouzel).—A nest of this bird was found on June 14th at 10,500 feet made of moss and roots, and situated on the trunk of a fallen tree covered with underground. It contained 3 fresh eggs in colour of a greenish blue ground profusely speckled all over with brownish spots and freckles. In shape they were very long and narrow measured  $1.36 \times .89$ :  $1.37 \times .89$ :  $1.36 \times .88$ .

*Myiophonus temmincki* (The Himalayan Whistling-Thrush).—I found this bird's nest with three fresh eggs on June 18th at about 10,000 feet.

*Oreocinclla mollissima* (The Plain-backed Mountain-Thrush).—I found one nest of this bird on June 14th situated in a low fork almost on the ground on the side of a hill. The nest was made of moss lined with roots and fine grass.

It contained four fresh eggs ( $1.41 \times .96$ :  $1.4 \times .93$ :  $1.4 \times .92$ :  $81.39 \times .95$ ) very handsomely marked the ground is whitish and especially at the larger end the eggs were profusely blotched and spotted with chestnut and reddish brown, and in some cases almost blood red. The bird was a close sitter and when disturbed hung about close by in a great state of agitation.

*Oreocinclla dauma* (Small-billed Mountain-Thrush).—I found two nests of this bird. The first on June 12th at 10,000 feet was situated in a low fork on a grassy bank made chiefly of moss and dry grass and lined with grass, and roots and contained two eggs just hatching and one newly hatched young. The second nest found on June 14th was built among large stones covered with moss and undergrowth on the side of a hill. The nest was similar to the first and contained three fresh eggs in colour of a whitish background profusely speckled all over with small red brown specks. They measured  $1.25 \times .92$ :  $1.27 \times .9$ :  $1.28 \times .91$ . The birds sat very close.

*Horornis fortipes* (The Strong-footed Bush-Warbler).—A nest of this bird was found on June 17th at about 9,500 feet. It was built of coarse grass and loosely put together so that it looked almost domed. It was profusely lined with feathers, and situated at 3 feet from the ground in a bramble at the foot of a bank. It contained four eggs of the most striking colour I have ever seen. A uniform deep chocolate tinged with purple. They measured  $0.70 \times 0.51$ :  $0.71 \times 0.53$ :  $0.72 \times 0.82$ :  $0.72 \times 0.51$ .

*Pnoepyga squamata* (The Scaly-breasted Wren).—On June 6th, I came across a nest of this bird at about 10,500 feet. The nest was built almost entirely of moss and was situated under an overhanging moss clad rock on the side of a ravine. It was domed with a hole at the side and contained three fresh eggs, pure white with the exception of two or three reddish brown specks on two of the eggs. They seemed very large for the size of the bird and measured  $0.8 \times 0.61$  and  $0.79 \times 0.66$ . Unfortunately the third egg got broken before I measured it. The bird sat very close and I almost caught it in the nest.

*Phylloscopus proregulus* (Pallas's Willow-Warbler).—On the 8th June, I moved camp and after marching some 6 miles, I sat down under a tree. My attention was soon attracted by two tiny birds which I took to be Goldcrests at first, making a great twittering and seemingly greatly agitated. Thinking there was probably a nest somewhere near I retired about 15 yards in cover where I could watch the tree. After some minutes the twittering suddenly ceased and the birds seemed to disappear. I approached the tree and gently shook the branch on which I had last seen the bird and to my amazement a bird flew out of the moss covered bough. I examined the branch carefully and eventually found a minute hole in the moss into which I carefully inserted my finger. I was delighted to feel 4 eggs. This was, I think, the most wonderfully concealed nest I have ever seen.

The branch on which it was built was itself thickly covered with moss and the nest was half suspended and closely built into the branch. It was made entirely of moss and profusely lined with feathers. The entrance hole at the top on one side was only about an inch across. When examining the bough at about 1 foot, I was unable to find the nest except by feeling with my fingers. The bird turned out to be *Phylloscopus proregulus* and the eggs half incubated were white with reddish brown spots chiefly at the larger end. One unfortunately broke when being blown. The other measured  $0.57 \times 0.45$ :  $0.6 \times 0.48$ :  $0.58 \times 0.46$ .

The nest was on the outside of the tree (moss covered oak) and about 7 feet from the ground.

Another nest of this bird found on June 17th contained four fully and fledged young. The nest was about 18 feet from the ground suspended from the outside branch of a fine tree and made entirely of moss.

*Ianthia rufilata* (The Red-flanked Bush-Robin).—A nest of this bird was found on June 15th at about 10,000 ft. The nest was in a hole in a bank about 4 ins. in and about 4 ft. from the ground. It was very well concealed and made of fine grass and lined profusely with the hair of the musk deer. It contained 3 fresh eggs of a whitish colour very faintly and sparingly spotted at the larger end with pale reddish brown. They measured  $0.72 \times 0.57$ :  $0.73 \times 0.57$  and  $0.74 \times 0.53$ . The birds kept in the neighbourhood when the nest was being robbed and showed great agitation.

*Accipiter virgatus* (The Besra Sparrow-Hawk).—On May 9th near Bhim Tal, I found the nest of this bird in a tree about 20 feet from the ground in a fork, overlooking a khud. The nest, made of sticks of various dimensions and about 18 inches across contained 2 fresh eggs, of a white ground colour blotched and spotted with blood-red and brown, one at the larger end, and one at the smaller. These I took. Three days later the nest contained another egg, white with a sort of pale brown smear over one side. The first 2 eggs measured  $1.65 \times 1.35$ :  $1.57 \times 1.32$  and the third one  $1.75 \times 1.3$ .

The birds showed the utmost concern when the nest was being robbed and flew and swooped at me again and again compelling me to ward them off with my hand. At intervals they would settle about 3 or 4 yards away screaming the whole time and then would attack with renewed vigour.

U. S. CLUB, LUCKNOW,  
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W. H. MATTHEWS.

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NO. VI.—THE OCCURRENCE OF THE INDIAN PITTA (*PITTA BRACHYURA*) IN THE KANGRA DISTRICT, PUNJAB.

In the Fauna of Br. India, Vol. 11, page 394, the range of *P. brachyura* is given as:—"The whole of India from Eastern Rajputana and Garhwal to Sikkhim, and Calcutta, extending South to Cape Comorin and Ceylon" so its occurrence in the only Province from which it is excluded, will be of interest. I first saw a single bird flying across the road on June 15th, and on the 25th of the same month, while motoring past, I noticed a bird leave a tree. I stopped the motor and waited and in a few minutes, it, or the pair, returned to the same tree. I got off and took my lunch to the foot of the tree and waited further developments and soon discovered the nest. It was some 30ft. from the ground, in the fork of a large "Bird-cherry." A large nest made of long strands of coarse grass and straw and lined with the leaves of the "pipul" tree, which must have been green when they were brought to the nest. Inside were 5 youngsters which could not have been more than a day old, as they did not show a single quill between the lot of them, except a faint trace of the wing quills.